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THE GARDEN CALENDAR

A radio discussion by W. R. Beattie, Bureau of Plant Industry, delivered in the Department of Agriculture period of the National Farm and Home Hour, broadcast by a network of 48 associate NBC radio stations, Monday, May 4, 1936.

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Hello folks. Last week Miss Van Deman and I talked about beans and tomatoes for canning. When dinnertime rolls around and that everlasting question of what to get for dinner has to be decided it's a comfortable feeling that either out in the garden or on the storage shelves in the cellar you have most excellent green or canned vegetables at your command. It may not be convenient to send to the store for your supplies but it is very little trouble to go into the garden and gather beans, peas, sweet corn, tomatoes or some other vegetable, or if it is wintertime and fresh vegetables are not available in the garden it is a simple matter to open one or two cans of your own home-canned products.

As we stated last week it takes good fresh vegetables to make good canned vegetables and the proper growing of the products is the first step in the canning program. Good soil that is well prepared and fertilized is the first essential, then the matter of getting the best varieties is important. Generally speaking the early crops of peas and beans are the best for canning but the quality of the product is dependent largely on moisture and plant food conditions in your soil. Beans that grow quickly are normally of better quality and texture than those that grow slowly for want of either plant food or moisture. The early ripening tomatoes are as a general rule firmer and of better flavor than those that come along during the hot, dry days of midsummer or late summer. You folks who live in the south know that you must do your canning before the hot, dry weather of summer sets in or not do any canning.

This whole matter of growing fruits and vegetables for canning at home is largely one of preference and some folks want to specialize on one thing and some on another. The ideal is to make up a list of the different kinds and the number of cans required by the family for the year then decide which ones shall be purchased and which shall be canned at home then you can figure on how much of each crop to grow to meet the canning requirements. Along with the canning budget you should decide about the vegetables that are to be stored in the fresh state and plant accordingly.

There was a young couple visiting at our house last Sunday evening and the young man who works in an office is very enthusiastic about his little garden in his back yard. "My mother" he said, "used to make the most delicious pickled yellow snap beans. I hope I can grow enough golder yellow snap beans in my garden to make a supply of those pickled beans according to my mother's recipe." There is the true gardening enthusiasm for you and a real goal to work to. If you and I and all who have gardens will make up our minds what we want on our pantry shelves

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and in our storage cellars next fall and plant accordingly we will stand a much better chance of attaining our goal than if we simply go about our gardening in a haphazard manner. For those who do not have gardens there is the opportunity to purchase choice fruits and vegetables on the markets for canning and preserving, but as Miss Van Deman suggested last week, be sure you have the equipment for doing the canning properly. I'll be glad to help you with the growing and storage of the products but Miss Van Deman will tell you how to can and preserve them.

I find that it pays to make special plantings of beans, tomatoes and sweet corn for canning rather than to depend upon the surplus from the regular plantings for summer use. Another important point is to handle the products grown for canning when they are in their prime condition and not allow them to become overmature. This applies especially to peas, beans and sweet corn, but there is a little more latitude with tomatoes. In no case should the peas, beans or corn be allowed to remain in the baskets in which they are gathered for any length of time but should be gathered and canned on the same day.

We seldom can any peas at our house, preferring to buy them by the case ready canned. We always have home canned snap beans on our shelves although we buy quantities of the fresh green beans on our markets during the winter. I do not believe we have been without home canned tomatoes for the past ten years and we sometimes have three or four year's supply on hand. Just recently we used canned tomatoes that were packed in 1930 and they were almost as fresh as if they had been gathered on the day they were used. Canned sweet corn is one of our specialties and for our supply we prefer the late crops of Country Gentleman and Stowell Evergreen. The sweet corn that develops late in the season appears to be more tender and sweeter than that grown during the hot weather, but the main point is to gather and can the corn before the milk becomes doughy and while the covering of the kernels is still very tender.

In many sections of the country sweet corn and tomatoes also snap beans may be grown on land from which a crop of early potatoes have been harvested. Where you fertilize the potatoes heavily the following crop will get the benefit of the residual fertilizer which has had sufficient time to become soluble and fully available as plant food.

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